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SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE ELECTIONS TO BE DELAYED; COUNCIL
MEMBERS REQUEST UNOCI EXIT PLAN

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) SRSG Choi told the Security Council on October 13 that elections would be delayed for political and technical reasons, and said the priority must be approving the provisional voters list as soon as possible. Choi said the 2.7 million names not on the voters list were a great concern. Ambassador DiCarlo stressed that support for UNOCI from the UN Mission in Liberia was only available until February, 2010, at the latest. France, the UK, and Japan called for a withdrawal plan for UNOCI. Russia called the Group of Experts ineffective and its reports biased. Choi concluded by requesting another Presidential Statement to urge parties to hold elections. END SUMMARY.

CHOI: AN ELECTION DELAY IS INEVITABLE BUT WORTH IT IF THE LIST IS CREDIBLE

¶2. (SBU) During closed consultations on October 13, UNOCI SRSG Choi said elections are "almost there," but warned the current November 29 date was not realistic due to political and technical reasons. He stressed it was most important to have a credible electoral list, and to ensure this it was worth delaying elections, possibly until January, 2010. (NOTE: In a private meeting with Ambassador DiCarlo on September 29, Choi said elections might need to be delayed until March, 2010. END NOTE.) He cautioned that a longer delay could signify a lack of political will, and said the challenges to reunification, including disarmament and integration in the north, could still hamper the peace process.

CHOI NOTES CONCERN OF 2.7 MILLION NAMES NOT ON VOTERS LIST

¶3. (SBU) Choi cautioned that an agreement must be reached soon regarding the 2.7 million names, roughly 40 percent of the voting population, which were currently not on the voters list. He said the appeals process for the list must be of a limited duration, and that the north needs a functioning judiciary to hear appeals. Choi called on all Council members to apply bilateral pressure on Cote d'Ivoire to respect the (as yet undisclosed) new electoral calendar.

U.S. STRESSES UNMIL AVAILABILITY IS LIMITED

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador DiCarlo said the U.S. is frustrated by the challenges to the electoral timeline and noted with concern the repeated delays in holding elections. She stressed that the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) would not be able to offer support to UNOCI after February, 2010. DiCarlo also expressed concerns over the recent violations to the arms embargo and diamond ban.

MEMBERS CALL FOR UNOCI DRAWDOWN PLAN

¶5. (SBU) French PR Araud said that Cote d'Ivoire PR Djedje told him on October 12 that elections would be held "in

2009," citing December 27 as a potential date. The UK called for an updated timeline so that the Council could track progress towards elections. France, Japan, and the UK requested the UN to report on the withdrawal plan for UNOCI. Both the UK and France requested a technical assessment mission be sent to Cote d'Ivoire before the January 2010 mandate renewal period.

¶16. (SBU) Uganda and the UK expressed concern over premature elections and the threat they would pose to a sustainable peace. Austria cited the importance of judicial effectiveness in the north. Costa Rica, Croatia, and Austria all joined the U.S. in stressing the need to protect women against gender based violence.

RUSSIA CALLS GROUP OF EXPERTS INEFFECTIVE

¶17. (SBU) Russia said UNOCI needed to shift from a peacekeeping to a peacebuilding mission. Russia also said the work of the Group of Experts (GOE) must be substantially improved, and that the GOE reporting was biased and ineffective. Russia looked forward to discussing further how to improve the role of the GOE.

CHOI REQUESTS ANOTHER PRST

¶18. (SBU) President Choi concluded by saying a presidential statement, calling on all parties to hold elections, would be of help.

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